

Jerry Capeci

# Gang Land News

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**The Five Families**

**BUTTON MEN**  
*and other Wiseguys*



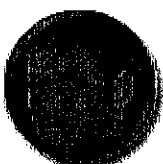
[John Gotti](#)



[John "Junior" Gotti](#)



[Alfonso "Little Al" D'Arco](#)



[Salvatore "Bull" Gravano](#)



[Joseph](#)



[Steven "Stevie"](#)

## This Week in Gang Land

January 1, 2015

By Jerry Capeci

### Lufthansa Heist Arrest The Top Mob Story Of 2014



Newspapers and magazines have printed countless articles about it. Several books were

written about it. They even made a movie about it. But 36 years later, the FBI finally arrested a mobster in the storied \$6 million Lufthansa Airlines Heist. It's no contest. The number one mob story of 2014 is the surprise indictment of Bonanno capo Vincent Asaro for taking part in the December 11, 1978 robbery.









Vincent Asaro

Sources say Asaro, who is slated to go to trial this summer, was done in by Gaspare (Gary) Valenti, a cousin and longtime mob underling. Valenti, 67, also implicated Asaro and Lufthansa heist mastermind James (Jimmy The Gent) Burke in a 1969 murder of a cohort who fell out of favor with the volatile Luchese gangster, according to court papers.

Until his arrest last January 23rd, Asaro, 79, had never been identified by any law enforcement official as a suspect in the memorable heist. But FBI agents Adam Mininni and Robert Ypelaar charged him with being an active participant in the daring pre-dawn robbery that is still the biggest heist in New York history.

It was a surprise to many, but Asaro knew what was coming. He learned seven months earlier — on June 17, 2013 — that he was going down for the Kennedy Airport heist as well as the 1969 murder of Paul Katz. By the end of that day, he was quite certain that his amazing run of luck in avoiding the law was about to end.

<u>Massino</u>	<u>Wonder" Crea</u>
	
<u>John "Sonny" Franzese</u>	<u>Domenico "Italian Dom" Cefalu</u>
	
<u>Vincent "Chin" Gigante</u>	<u>Carmine "Junior" Persico</u>
	
<u>Anthony "Gaspipe" Casso</u>	<u>Liborio "Barney" Bellomo</u>

Other Wiseguys ...

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Gang Land's Policies



FBI agents Adam Mininni, Robert Ypelaar and Christopher Hudson (rear) escort Vincent Asaro to court, 1-23-2014

The bad news hit Asaro as he was driving his cousin Gary Valenti on their appointed rounds when, at about 10 AM, Valenti, having been coached by the FBI, told Asaro that the feds were digging up Katz's remains in

Ozone Park. That's where Valenti and Asaro's son Jerome had buried them in 1984, after digging them up from their first resting place.

"The feds are all over Liberty Avenue," said Valenti, explaining that he had seen the activity coming back from his doctor's office, according to court papers. Minutes later, after Asaro dropped Valenti off, his worst fears were confirmed when he saw the FBI dig on Liberty Avenue for himself as a passenger in another car.

Before the day was over, the shaken Asaro crashed his own car into a stanchion of the elevated A train that runs on Liberty Avenue. The badly rattled gangster also ran into the FBI's hands-on supervisor, Seamus McElearney, near the dig. The agent cheerfully told Asaro that they would be seeing each other again in a few months. That same day, Asaro got worse news: His cousin Gary Valenti had disappeared.

Before he vanished into federal protection, Valenti, who began cooperating with the FBI in 2009, managed to tape record Asaro complaining that Burke never gave him a fair share of "the proceeds from the heist." Valenti also told agents he "participated in several planning meetings" as well as the actual robbery with Asaro and Burke, according to court records in the case.

"We never got our right money, what we were supposed to get" from the heist, Asaro told Valenti on February 17, 2011. "We got fucked all around, that fucking Jimmy (Burke) kept everything," Asaro said, according to a snippet of the talk contained in court filings.



Jerome Asaro GLE

Valenti told the feds that Jimmy The Gent personally informed him about the "score" early on and that "shortly after the robbery," Valenti brought "an attache case filled with gold and jewelry" to Joseph Massino, who was then a capo and Asaro's mob superior and knew that "the cousins" had taken part in the heist, according to the court filings.

Massino and his brother-in-law, former underboss Salvatore Vitale, have each told the feds that Asaro and

Valenti were involved in the heist, and prosecutors Nicole Argentieri and Alicyn Cooley have indicated that the turncoat brothers-in-law may also be called as trial witnesses against the aging capo.



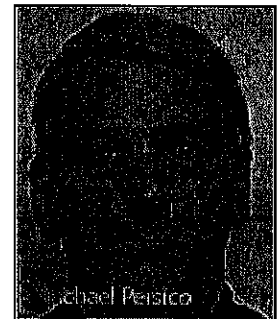
Thomas DiFiore, also await sentencing for plea deals to loansharking charges carrying recommended sentences up to 51 months behind bars.

Asaro's wiseguy son Jerome pleaded guilty to digging up Katz's bones and reburying them to help his dad evade a possible murder rap in a plea deal with a recommended prison term of up to eight years in prison. Three other Bonannos, including acting boss Thomas (Tommy D) DiFiore, also await sentencing for plea deals to

Meanwhile, the first recipient of the **Tommy Gioeli Whiner Of The Year Award** goes to another Tommy from Long Island, the aforementioned Thomas DiFiore, for trying for the third time to get out of prison to see his own doctor for a myriad of ailments that were filed last month with Brooklyn Federal Judge Alynne Ross. On Christmas Eve, Ross stated that her March ruling that the Metropolitan Detention Center should be able to handle all of Tommy D's medical needs still applied, but that he could renew his request if his "medical issues are not being adequately monitored and addressed by the MDC."

On the other side of the aisle, prosecutors Argentieri and Allon Lifshitz get **Honorable Mentions For Whining** for claiming that Michael Persico's motion to withdraw his guilty would prejudice them by forcing them "to reassemble (their) witnesses and prepare anew for trial nearly two years after" they gave him a spectacular deal that covers three murders and is the envy of wiseguys everywhere. The deal is so good that Perciso's best efforts by noted appeals specialist Marc Fernich were unable to undermine it.

Persico, whose plea deal recommends a 37-to-46 month prison term, faces the music for his guilty plea next month. Meanwhile, he gets the **What Is He, Nuts? Award** for trying to ice the deal that calls for a maximum of five years behind bars, and opt for trial and the possibility of life in prison if convicted of murder, or a likely 20 year term if found guilty of racketeering or any of the many extortion counts in his indictment.



Genovese associate Mario (The Baker) Fortunato gets the **Two Wrongs Make A Right Award** for winning a \$300,000 settlement last month from New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman for the 22 months he spent in state prison for a murder rap that was overturned by a state appeals court. His federal murder conviction was also

tossed by a federal appeals panel, but there's little chance The Baker will get any dough from the feds for time he spent in federal prison — or even seek any. As Fortunato's attorney Irving Cohen told Gang Land last year, it's much easier to win a judgment for a wrongful conviction in a state Court of Claims suit than one in federal court.

## Best Prosecutor And Best Defense Lawyer Toiled In Same Case



Jason Masimore

It seems like an improbable, if not impossible proposition, but Gang Land's selections for best prosecutor and best defense lawyer of the year go to adversaries in the same Manhattan Federal Court murder case. The indictment charged longtime Gambino family gangster Daniel Fama with taking part in the last mob rubout ordered by John Gotti.

Assistant U.S. attorney Jason Masimore gets the **Best Prosecutor Award** for his work in the case against Fama, who was charged with killing mob associate Edward (Eddie The Chink) Garofalo on August 8, 1990 to prevent him from cooperating with the feds. Masimore didn't convict Fama. Prodded by the defense lawyer, he double-checked to make sure the government had the evidence to prove its case, and then, after determining that it didn't, moved to dismiss the indictment.

A Georgetown Law School grad, Masimore has handled cases involving 415 defendants since joining the Manhattan U.S. Attorney's office nearly six years ago. It's doubtful he'll win any Justice Department awards for his work in the Fama case. And FBI agents in the squad that investigates Gambino and Luchese mobsters aren't big fans of his either.

Masimore getting any recognition — even from Gang Land — for enabling a gangster who almost certainly was involved in Garofalo's slaying to get away with murder may not make law enforcement officials happy. And it won't sit right with the dead man's daughters, who said they were delighted when Fama was charged with their father's murder.



The problem with the case, Fama's defense lawyer noted early and often, in court papers and to the judge in the case, was the alleged motive in the indictment. Fama was charged with killing Garofalo "with the intent to prevent that person from communicating to a law enforcement officer information related to the commission of a federal offense."